

URN: 21-106
Subject: Community Champions' Programme - Community Food Project
Report to: Housing and Neighbourhoods Committee – 10th June 2021
Report by: Paula Boyce, Strategic Director

RECOMMENDATIONS

That Housing & Neighbourhoods Committee:

- 1. Notes the research and stakeholder engagement undertaken by the Norfolk Community Foundation (NCF) in partnership with the Borough Council, and statutory partners including representatives from the CCG and Primary Care Networks.**
- 2. Supports the recommendation that Shrublands Youth and Adult Centre Charitable Trust (SYACCT) and The Salvation Army Great Yarmouth Corps (TSAGYC) are the most suitable Voluntary Community & Social Enterprise (VCSE) operators for the proposed Community Food Stores located on the Shrublands site in Gorleston and in Great Yarmouth respectively.**
- 3. Invites the SYACCT and TSAGYC to submit grant applications to the Council accompanied by sustainable business plans developed in association with the NCF, as preferred lead VCSE organisations to establish sustainable VCSE-operated community-based food stores.**
- 4. Delegates authority to the Strategic Director to award grants, subject to satisfactory proposals from the applicants, to run the two food stores on a community supermarket operating model, provided also that necessary permissions, consents and operational business plans are in place.**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1** In January 2021, the Council was successful in applying for a grant to deliver the Community Champions Programme. This was made available by the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG), working jointly with National Health Services (NHS) England. The programme invited local authorities and voluntary groups to apply and work with Public Health England to provide targeted support for people shown to be most at risk from Coronavirus (COVID-19).
- 1.2** One strand of the Community Champion project is to support the establishment of a sustainable and accessible VCSE-operated food offer, via a community supermarket. The community store or supermarket will offer residents an affordable way to make a contribution to their food shop, reduce waste going to landfill by making use of food abundance and provide a pathway for residents to become financially resilient, independent and able to access mainstream food

provision. It will achieve this by connecting residents with our local partners to offer a range of wrap around support provision to our communities while providing access to affordable food options.

- 1.3 Establishing a successful community store will contribute to all four Locality Strategy priorities: 1. Health and Wellbeing, 2. Low Educational Attainment, Skills and Aspirations, 3. Vulnerability and Exploitation and 4. Loneliness, Isolation and Social Exclusion. It will also support organisations that have greatly adapted their delivery by increasing their food offer, to return to their preferred delivery activities. These adaptations have been due to the pressures and impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on communities.
- 1.4 The spend intentions within the Community Champions' Programme, including the establishment of a community food store, were reported to and endorsed by Housing & Neighbourhoods Committee (04 March 2021).

2. FINDINGS FROM FEASIBILITY WORK

2.1 The Norfolk Community Foundation (NCF) was identified as a key strategic partner to help the Council establish this project and find the right local partner(s), set-up the supply chain, seek additional grant and private sector support. The NCF was therefore commissioned to undertake a feasibility study on the back of their trusted relationship with local community groups and VCSE organisations and their experience of establishing a very similar store in Thetford earlier in 2021. In doing so, it was agreed that the objectives of the Community Store are to:

- Deliver a long-term sustainable solution to accessing food in targeted high areas of deprivation and disadvantage in Great Yarmouth Borough.
- Develop a model that is scalable across the Borough and enables the development of wrap around community support activities, such as healthy living/debt/employment support. Please see Phase 2 & 3 below.
- Develop local and national partnerships to deepen the initial food offer, such as with farming communities and housing associations.
- Position the Great Yarmouth community food offer as part of emerging plans for 'Nourishing Norfolk' in collaboration with Norfolk County Council and other key partners.

2.2 By reviewing existing and historic work of the NCF and Great Yarmouth Borough Council, a list of relevant potential lead organisations and collaborators was collated (Appendix 1). 59 staff working at 35 different organisations were invited to a virtual stakeholder meeting held on the 1st April 2021. The meeting provided a virtual forum to hear more about community supermarkets, find out how this project fits in with the Locality Strategy and have the chance to share ideas and ask questions as part of the scoping and consultation process.

2.3 At the stakeholder and partners' meeting, there was a clear and unanimous view that there was a need for a more accessible, long-term and sustainable solution for affordable food provision locally. There were a number of support offers from partners, exploring ways to work together and pooling resources to make this project successful.

2.4 As a part of the project scoping Phase 1, NCF has compiled an Interim Options Report (Appendix 2). The findings of the report were based on NCF's investigative work to identify the most suitable and relevant community-based organisation to take the lead on the Community Supermarket project. In coming to its recommendation the following factors were considered in terms of best fit: situated in an area of high deprivation; capacity, capability and desire to deliver; suitable venue; good network of staff and volunteer bank; community infrastructure; accessibility;

suitable organisations; potential for a café; a trusted community space; proven collaborative and partnership approach; and supply chain. Subject to Members' approval of a community-based operator, the Council and the NCF will continue to support that agency to ensure their proposal will lead to a sustainable operating model after 12 months of seed funding. A detailed analysis of possible VCSE operators can be found on pages 9 and 10, in Appendix 2.

- 2.5 After considering all key features, NCF is recommending that the Council invites the Shrublands Youth and Adult Centre Charitable Trust (SYACCT) and The Salvation Army Great Yarmouth Corps (TSAGYC) to work with the NCF and the Council, to prepare business plans and submit grant applications to set-up community food stores. The grant will seed fund two community stores for the first twelve months via the MHCLG Community Champions' Programme grant.
- 2.6 Owing to the immediate availability of a physical venue, it is likely that the Gorleston store will be the first of the two community stores in the borough with the Great Yarmouth store coming onstream as soon as practically possible in 2021. Both community food stores would sit within a broader 'Nourishing Norfolk' campaign championed by Norfolk County Council.
- 2.7 The Housing and Neighbourhoods Committee is therefore asked to support moving the project forward by accepting NCF's conclusion and inviting both the SYACCT and TSAGYC to apply for a grant and submit proposals and business plans to demonstrate their sustainability to operate a community food store. If successful, each organisation will be awarded grant funding to work directly with NCF and its national partners FareShare, HiS Church and Country Food Trust.
- 2.8 Assuming the plans as set-out for the project including any obstacles and risks are overcome, the intention is to establish and open the Shrublands Community Store in the summer of 2021 and the Great Yarmouth Community Store in the autumn of 2021.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 As part of the £465,000 MHCLG grant awarded, £120,000 has been allowed for the community food project across the borough to ideally establish two stores. It is anticipated that further external funders/supporters will come onboard via the NCF's philanthropic work to enable the stores to be sustainable going forward. For example, the NCF supported the set-up and funding of the Burrell Centre Community Supermarket in Thetford with Breckland Council, whereby additional sources of external funding and support from local businesses was leveraged into the project.
- 3.2 As with the other workstreams in the Community Champions' Programme, the MHCLG funding must be committed and spent by 30th September 2021.

4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Localism Act 2011 allows for a general power of competence for local authorities to act in innovative ways, that is, in doing things that are unlike anything that a local authority – or any other public body – has done before, or may currently do.
- 4.2 The proposed location of the first store, namely Shrublands, is within a site owned by Norfolk CC and is part-leased to the SYACCT. The Council will ensure the lease allows for a retail shop and that any necessary planning and licenses are in place. The location for the second Great Yarmouth store is yet to be identified. TSAGYC has indicated it wishes to obtain larger premises to be able to

operate the Community Store and provide the space to enable further wrap-around support services.

- 4.3 In establishing and operating the community store model in the borough, the Council and NCF will work with the lead VCSE operators to ensure compliance with all necessary legal and food-related guidance including but not limited to Food Safety Act (1990), The General Food Regulations (2004) and The Food Safety and Hygiene (England) Regulations 2013, and associated Trading Standards regulations.

5. RISK IMPLICATIONS

Risk	Mitigation
Lack of community support for chosen lead provider	From the NCF's exploratory work and scoping, the SYACCT is known to have a strong support network of volunteers and works in partnership with other VCSE, community & faith organisations in the borough. The Trust is also part of the MESH Neighbourhood Board and multi-agency Community Hub operating model.
SYACCT is unable to obtain the necessary permissions to operate a store on its existing Shrublands site.	Shrublands Youth and Adult Centre Charitable Trust (SYACCT) has operated on the Norfolk County Council-owned Shrublands site since 1977 and a draft lease is in place. Consent will be required from the County Council as landlord together with any potential changes to planning. Should permission not be possible then the council and NCF would work with SYACCT to consider other locations for the store.
The Salvation Army Great Yarmouth Corps is unable to find suitable premises	The Council will support the charity to scope and identify suitable premises in order to deliver this project.
Lead operators are unable to satisfy the Council that their respective business plan is sustainable.	Alternative operating models and potential provider partners will be re-explored.

RECOMMENDATIONS


Housing and Neighbourhoods Committee:

- a. Notes the research and stakeholder engagement undertaken by the Norfolk Community Foundation (NCF) in partnership with the Borough Council, and statutory partners including representatives from the CCG and Primary Care Networks.
 - b. Supports the recommendation that Shrublands Youth and Adult Centre Charitable Trust (SYACCT) and The Salvation Army Great Yarmouth Corps (TSAGYC) are the most suitable VCSE operators for proposed Community Food Stores located on the Shrublands site in Gorleston and in Great Yarmouth respectively.
 - c. Invites the SYACCT and TSAGYC to submit a grant application to the Council together with a sustainable business plan supported by the NCF, as preferred lead VCSE organisations to establish sustainable and accessible VCSE-operated community-based food stores.
-

-
- d. Delegates authority to the Strategic Director to award grants, subject to satisfactory proposals from the applicants, to run the two food stores on a community supermarket operating model, provided also that necessary permissions, consents and operational business plans are in place.
-

Area for consideration	Comment
Monitoring Officer Consultation:	Yes
Section 151 Officer Consultation:	Yes
Existing Council Policies:	Corporate Plan, Annual Action Plan, Great Yarmouth Locality Strategy
Financial Implications:	Yes – as set out in section 3
Legal Implications (including human rights):	Yes – as set out in section 4
Risk Implications:	Minimal
Equality Issues/EQIA assessment:	No
Crime & Disorder:	No
Every Child Matters:	No

**NCF's List of VCSE, Community Groups and Statutory Partner Organisations contacted regarding
the Great Yarmouth Community Food Project**

Access Community Trust	Great Yarmouth Food Bank Plus	Norfolk Citizens Advice
Action for Children	Great Yarmouth Pathways	Salvation Army
Active Norfolk	GY Food Net	Shrublands Youth and Adult Centre Charitable Trust
Belton Pantry	GY Library	St Mary Magdalene PCC (Gorleston)
Carers Matters Norfolk	GY PCN	St Marys Church Martham Foodbank
Change Grow Live	GYROS	Sunbeams Play
DIAL Great Yarmouth	Health Watch Norfolk	The Bridge
East Coast College	Imagine Together Norfolk	Top Banana
Gorleston Baptist Church The Well	Kingsgate Community Church (Great Yarmouth)	Woodlands Primary academy
Gorleston Library	Mandalay Wellbeing CIC	
Gorleston PCN	Millwood Surgery	
Great Yarmouth & Gorleston Young Carers Project	NCC Public Health	
Great Yarmouth and Waveney CCG	Norfolk and Waveney Mind	



Community Champions Programme

Community Supermarket - Interim Options Report

Context

In January 2021, Great Yarmouth Borough Council (GYBC) were successful in applying for a grant to deliver the Community Champions Programme. This was made available by the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG), working jointly with National Health Services (NHS) England. The programme invited local authorities and voluntary groups to apply and work with Public Health England to provide targeted support for people shown to be most at risk from Coronavirus (COVID-19).

The four strands of the GYBC Community Champion Programme are:

- Building stronger more inclusive relationships with target communities
- Supporting the establishment of a sustainable and accessible VCSE-operated food offer, via a community supermarket
- Increase capability and capacity to interact and communicate with those residents at greater risk from COVID-19
- Programme Evaluation

This Interim Options Report will explore in greater depth the Community Supermarket strand of the Community Champions programme. It will include: the rationale for a community supermarket, the methodology used to identify partners, key features of a potential lead organisation, and the organisations recognised with the key features and who are in a position to join this partnership; to develop and deliver a sustainable solution to accessing food in targeted areas of high deprivation and disadvantage in the Great Yarmouth Borough.

Rationale

In Great Yarmouth, there is a Multiagency Locality Board made up of organisations from across all sectors working in the area. The board have produced the Locality Strategy, which identifies 4 key priorities the organisations can collectively work on. This will enable a more effective and proactive approach to supporting our communities by preventing avoidable issues and making available early intervention advice and support.

The priority areas are:

- Health and Wellbeing
- Low Educational Attainment, Skills and Aspirations
- Vulnerability and Exploitation
- Loneliness, Isolation and Social Exclusion

During the COVID 19 pandemic, communities have been faced with extra pressures relating to these priority areas. Due to this pressure, there has been an increase in residents experiencing food

poverty. Great Yarmouth has experienced the greatest number of food requests in the County and Norfolk Community Foundation has attracted and distributed funding to many VCSE organisations in Great Yarmouth and surrounding area to support communities through this challenging time.

Feedback from some of these organisations confirms that the community food need has resulted in the organisations' food offer now being their main activity. Other support offers provided by these organisations have been required to take a back seat. NCF have developed a longer-term, sustainable solution to help alleviate the pressures on emergency food providers and to ensure that quality, affordable food is available more widely.

Method

By reviewing existing and historic work of Norfolk Community Foundation and Great Yarmouth Borough Council, a list of relevant potential partners was collated using their shared local knowledge. This included organisations providing alternative food provision, professionals from the 2 local Primary Care Networks and organisations supporting residents experiencing food poverty with wider support needs (including Norfolk Library Service, DIAL, Shrublands Trust and Action for Children's Early Childhood and Family Services). The potential partners were invited to a virtual meeting on 1st April 2021 to hear more about community supermarkets, to find out how this project fits in with the locality strategy, and have the chance to share ideas and ask questions as part of the scoping and consultation process. After the meeting, the attendees identified 2 extra organisations to involve in future meetings. At the meeting, there was a clear and unanimous view for the need for a more accessible, long-term and sustainable solution for affordable food provision locally. There were a variety of offers of support by partners, exploring ways to work together and pooling resources to make this project successful.

Key Features

Taking the learnings from the development of the Burrell Shop, a list of key features needed to successfully and sustainably set up a community supermarket have been determined and used to help identify the VCSE organisations in the best position to successfully work on this project.

The table below lists these key features identified as being desirable and, in some cases, required to ensure the efficient mobilisation of a sustainable Community Supermarket.

Key features	
Area of deprivation and high need	Being based within an area of high deprivation will make the community supermarket more accessible to the target audience – primarily families who are struggling, but increasingly also single pensioners. Many who are in need of support are from working households.
Capacity, capability and desire to deliver	The organisation will have the capacity and capability to lead on mobilising a sustainable community supermarket with support from NCF and GYBC. The community supermarket will fit in with the organisations aims and objectives to ensure there is the passion and drive to develop a successful project.
Suitable venue	A suitable venue is key in terms of the geography, parking facilities, being accessible, appropriate space for a supermarket and storeroom to place stock. It is also relevant to look at impacts to the wider area e.g. negative impact on local food businesses, although our experience shows that other food businesses are wholly supportive of the concept.
Staff and volunteer bank	Having competent staff and a bank of volunteers available will ensure efficient mobilisation and day to day running of the community supermarket.

Community infrastructure	Having a predeveloped network of partners delivering a variety of support offers onsite will increase the speed at which wrap around support can be offered to the local community who use the Community Supermarket.
Accessibility	An accessible venue will ensure residents experiencing the highest level of inequalities and barriers to accessing opportunities are fully supported to engage. Factors include disability friendly facilities, access to translation services and parking although it is anticipated that most will walk or cycle to the supermarket.
Suitable organisation	A VCSE organisation with a proven track record of successfully delivering activities to communities experiencing high levels of deprivation and food poverty. To include appropriate governance and relevant policies and procedures.
Potential for a café	Community Supermarkets set up in other areas have really benefitted from an onsite café. This creates an extra layer of sustainability and income generation and additional affordable options for the local community, encouraging residents to try new healthy options. It also offers another outlet to direct food abundance, reducing the amount of food waste going to landfill.
A trusted community space	A community space that is well known to and trusted by the community will maximise the benefits of a community supermarket and additional wrap-around support.
Proven collaborative and partnership approach	An organisation with a proven collaborative approach will be in a stronger position to develop a sustainable community supermarket and connect communities to the wrap around support, reducing inequalities and drive change for our communities, resulting in improved levels of resilience.
Supply chain	To be able to nurture and further develop relationships with supply chain organisations brokered by NCF e.g. HiS Church, Country Food Trust and Fareshare. Able to develop new relationships with local horticultural organisations to increase access to local quality food in order to trade and be sustainable. NCF will continue to support and assist in securing consistent supplies.

Key Organisations

The two priority key features are identified as:

- Area of deprivation and high need
- Capacity, capability and desire to deliver

Using our knowledge and experience of working with a number of VCSE organisations delivering services in the GYBC area, and with the priority key features in mind, we explored working with the following organisations as the anchor to the delivery of a Community Supermarket:

Access Community Trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently exploring potential sites for their Crisis Cafés - looking at High Street locations in both Gorleston and Gt Yarmouth, and also King's Lynn. • Experience of working with 'hard to reach'. • Passionate about 'open access' to opportunities and support. • ACT continue to expand to meet need across Suffolk and into Norfolk - current capacity to deliver the community supermarket project at pace could be a challenge. • Very keen to partner for referrals and other practical support once the food offering is in place.
------------------------	--

Gorleston Baptist Church – The Well Drop-in and Foodbank	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current foodbank and takeaway lunch scheme operate on a referral basis (over 50 referral agencies) – good partnership working. • Counselling and wrap-around support are key to their work. • Very keen to partner for referrals and other practical support once the food offering is in place. • Limited opening times and although supportive of the community supermarket model, not in a position to host. • Would be interested in reduced offering – possibly consider the pantry model.
Salvation Army – Great Yarmouth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have been exploring potential community supermarket, but unable to host at present site. • Large bank of volunteers. • Passionate about supporting people to help themselves - proven track record of 'open access' and partnership working. • Prior to the pandemic mainly supporting the homeless and vulnerably housed, this has expanded greatly. • Capt. Marie Burr joined Gt Y Salvation Army in July 2020 and has huge ambition to offer longer-term sustainable support, rather than continuing with just food parcels and basic support currently on offer. • To date they have not been able to identify new premises and continue their search.
Shrublands Trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trusted community space open from 8am to 10pm, 7 days a week under normal circumstances. • Existing café on-site with large team of volunteers. • Existing space for community supermarket and storage. • Ethos of community-based activities and partnerships, building on the strengths of the local community. • Passionate about supporting people to help themselves – to move from relief to resilience. • Capacity to deliver at pace. • Recognised as a key organisation.
St Mary Magdalene Gorleston	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part of the Gt Y Foodbank network and operate their food bank x3 mornings a week - partner referral system. • Part of the 2020 COVID-19 Foodbank Emergency Delivery Service. • Dedicated team of volunteers. • Community activities based in the church and church hall – no facility for a permanent community supermarket.

Conclusion and Recommendation:

Taking all key features into account, and the desire to deliver an operational community supermarket at pace, The Shrublands Trust has been identified as the strongest contender to host and lead on the delivery. The Salvation Army in Great Yarmouth are a strong contender and are keen to collaborate. It has been impressive to see the strength and desire of the VCSE organisations wishing to support the project. NCF will continue to offer support as part of their wider Nourishing Norfolk Initiative.

In conclusion, Shrublands Trust are recommended as the anchor organisation with the Salvation Army in Great Yarmouth recommended as the lead partnership organisation. This would ensure that both Gorleston and Great Yarmouth are supported equitably with two trusted and committed organisations.